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United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

On 10 May 2010, the Secretary-General sent notes verbales to Israel and all other Member States, drawing their attention to the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolutions 64/87 to 64/90, and requesting information by 8 July 2010 concerning any action taken or envisaged in relation to their implementation. Replies dated 8 July and 28 June 2010 were received from Denmark and Israel, responding among other things to the request contained in paragraph 4 of resolution 64/90. The full text of the replies is reproduced in the present report. No information has been received from other Member States regarding resolution 64/90.

* A/65/150.

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1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 64/90, on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues.

2. On 10 May 2010, the Secretary-General drew the attention of the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations to resolutions 64/87 to 64/90, all of 10 December 2009, with the request that the Permanent Representative inform him by 8 July 2010 of any steps her Government had taken or envisaged taking in implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolutions.

3. Also on 10 May 2010, the Secretary-General sent a note verbale to all other Member States, drawing their attention to the relevant provisions of resolutions 64/87 to 64/90, and requesting information by 8 July 2010 on any actions taken or envisaged in relation to their implementation.

4. A reply dated 8 July 2010 was received from Denmark, responding among other things to the request contained in paragraph 4 of resolution 64/90. The full text of the reply reads as follows:

[Original: English]

> With regard to resolutions 64/87, 64/88 and 64/89, paragraph 23, Denmark has this year supported UNRWA with a core contribution of DKr 70 million, as part of its continuous support to the Agency. The confirmation of an additional DKr 10 million contribution for the implementation of education activities in Gaza is yet another expression of support to the development mission of the Agency and represents a concrete investment in the future of Palestine refugees. This contribution comes on the backdrop of Denmark's work in the UNRWA Advisory Commission to sustain the Agency's management reform.
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> With specific regard to resolution 64/89, paragraph 22, regarding special allocations for grants and scholarships for higher education to Palestine refugees, Denmark has in 2009 supported the higher education of three Palestinian individuals, two females and one male, through the Danida Fellowship Centre. This was an increase compared to 2007 and 2008, when only one individual was supported through the Danida Fellowship Centre.
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> Regarding resolution 64/90, which urges States to provide the Secretary-General with any pertinent information in their possession concerning Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel, Denmark contributes through the continuous reporting on the overall political and developmental situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Through support to human rights organizations engaged in the field, Denmark furthermore contributes to information and monitoring of the issue.

5. A reply dated 28 June 2010 was received from Israel, responding among other things to the request contained in paragraph 4 of resolution 64/90. The full text of the reply reads as follows:

[Original: English]

> While Israel voted against these resolutions [64/87 to 64/90] in light of their politicization and one-sided perspective, as it has done on similar resolutions in the past, the Permanent Mission wishes to reiterate Israel's support for UNRWA's humanitarian activities. In this respect, Israel reaffirms its intention to continue facilitating UNRWA's extension of humanitarian services to its beneficiaries in the field.
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> Despite an ongoing and acute threat to its security, Israel has gone to great lengths fostering conditions for Palestinian economic development and cooperation, including liberalization of the system by which civilian goods enter Gaza, as well as engaging in political dialogue with the Palestinian Authority and assisting in extending humanitarian assistance to Palestinian beneficiaries.
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> Over the last year, Israel has substantially eased the security-related restrictions in the West Bank. Since 2008, the number of key checkpoints has been reduced from 41 to 14. Since April 2008, 357 obstacles (earth mounds, roadblocks) have been removed. In January 2010, 10 roadblocks were removed on Route 60, the major north-south artery in the West Bank. Generally, movement from north to south in the West Bank is now smooth, with only a few checkpoints along the way, operated as normally open. These and other positive developments have resulted in an economic growth rate of 8 per cent in the West Bank in 2009, accompanied by a growth in foreign investment of 600 per cent since 2008.
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> Despite attacks by Hamas, Israel continues to facilitate the entry of large quantities of humanitarian supplies into Gaza and maintains an ongoing humanitarian corridor for the transfer of perishable and staple food items to Gaza. In 2009, 738,576 tons (30,576 trucks) of humanitarian commodities were transferred to the Gaza Strip. In January and February 2010, 92,138.1 tons (4,056 trucks) were transferred. In 2009, 22,849 Palestinians exited the Strip, among them 10,544 patients and their companions, exiting for medical treatment in Israel. In 2009, 21,200 international organization staff members entered the Gaza Strip. In addition, numerous infrastructural projects have been advanced, including in the fields of housing, classrooms, sewage treatment plants and medical facilities. In this regard, in anticipation of winter, 3,607 tons of glass (103 truckloads) were transferred to Gaza in late 2009. Also, in the first quarter of 2010, 23 tons of iron and 25 tons of cement were transferred to the Gaza Strip from Israel, with an additional 39 tons of building material in May 2010. In June 2010 the Government of Israel has reviewed its policy towards Gaza and decided to liberalize the system by which civilian goods enter Gaza, including expansion of the inflow of materials for civilian projects that are under international supervision.
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> Notwithstanding the above, terrorist organizations in the West Bank and Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip remain active in planning, preparing and attempting to execute terrorist attacks.
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> In 2009, 646 terrorist attacks emanated from or were carried out in the West Bank, leading to five deaths (three victims were shot and two were attacked and stabbed to death). The first half of 2010 witnessed an alarming escalation in terrorist activity against Israeli targets in the West Bank and the Jerusalem area. In the first two months of 2010, 87 terrorist attacks were carried out in the West Bank. In February 2010, an Israeli citizen was stabbed to death in one of these attacks. In March 2010, 89 attacks were recorded in the West Bank and Jerusalem: three explosive devices, five attacks by gunfire, two stone-throwing attacks, and 79 Molotov cocktails. In June 2010 an Israeli

citizen was killed and three others were wounded when Palestinian terrorists opened fire on their vehicle.

In 2009, 699 terrorist attacks emanated from the Gaza Strip, killing nine Israeli citizens. Between January and March 2010, over 80 terrorist attacks from Gaza were recorded, including rocket and mortar fire, placement of improvised explosive devices and small-arms fire against Israel. Three victims were murdered in these attacks — two Israeli soldiers and a Thai worker. The rocket and mortar attacks against Israel in the past year are a continuation of a nine-year-long terrorist campaign in which many thousands of such projectiles have been launched at Israeli civilian centres from Gaza. Troublingly, none of the above is mentioned in any of the aforementioned resolutions.

Notwithstanding its support for UNRWA's humanitarian activities, Israel remains concerned by the political motivation of the aforesaid resolutions, and is disturbed by the fact that they present a one-sided view which fails to reflect the reality on the ground. In this respect, public statements of UNRWA officials which are clearly political and one-sided in tone are deeply troubling. As a professional, humanitarian body, UNRWA must be vigilant in avoiding references to controversial matters of a political nature.

Israel supports a consolidation of UNRWA resolutions, and a removal of all extraneous political language. Moreover, Israel urges the Secretary-General and UNRWA to consider, together with the concerned parties, ways in which the United Nations can enhance the manner in which it advances the welfare of the Palestinian people.

In this respect, Israel favours an application in the Palestinian context of the standard principles guiding the United Nations with respect to treatment of refugees. Specifically, UNRWA's mandate should be such that entitlement to its services will be defined in a manner consistent with the standard United Nations policy on refugees. Furthermore, UNRWA's mandate should include the active promotion in the Palestinian context of the broadly applied United Nations goals of resettlement and local integration of refugees.

The annual General Assembly resolutions on UNRWA represent a politically motivated departure from the standard United Nations policy on refugee matters. This politicization of a strictly humanitarian issue has exacerbated the situation of the Palestinian refugees by preventing practical solutions to their needs, such as have been successfully implemented with respect to numerous groups of refugees around the world. Israel attaches importance to promoting such changes in these resolutions as will ensure that the mandate of UNRWA is consistent with the general principles guiding United Nations policy on refugees.

6. No information has been received from other Member States with regard to the request contained in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 64/90.